



# Plant Collection Information Sheet

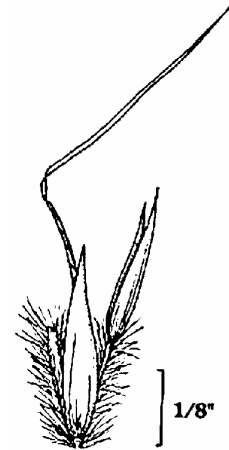
Big bluestem, *Andropogon gerardii*

**Scientific Name:** *Andropogon gerardii* Vitman.

**Common Name:** big bluestem

## Morphological Characteristics:

- native, perennial
- warm season grass
- tufted, forms sod
- short, scaly rhizomes
- tall, stems reaching a height of 3 to 8 feet
- stems are purplish at the base, covered with fine hair
- leaves are long, flat with scabrous margins
- many leaves are carried up on the stem
- seed heads normally have 3 spikelets that appear like a turkey foot
- adapted to deep fertile soils, can be found on shallow or gravelly soils
- adapted to a range of other soil limitations such as wet bottomlands, low pH, and low fertility
- begins growth in the spring and will continue up until the first killing frost
- plant turn reddish brown during fall and into winter



USDA-NRCS PLANTS Database /  
USDA NRCS. *Wetland flora: Field office  
illustrated guide to plant species.*  
USDA Natural Resources Conservation

## Conservation Use:

Why collect this plant?

In Louisiana there is a lack of locally-adapted native (ecotypic) plant materials for use in revegetation projects. The **Louisiana Native Plant Initiative (LNPI)** was established to collect, evaluate and release new plant materials for use in Louisiana. The goals of the **LNPI** are to conserve a vanishing natural resource and provide an essential step in the development of a native plant industry in Louisiana. Commercial growers will then be able to supply plant material for restoration, revegetation, roadside plantings and the ornamental plant industry that are adapted to the state.

Louisiana NRCS in cooperation with **LNPI** has identified big bluestem, *Andropogon gerardii* as a plant meeting project objectives. Plant and seed collections supporting **LNPI** are targeted for all Louisiana Parishes.

Future ecotype development will benefit the following conservation practice standards: 644 Wetland Wildlife Habitat management; 645 Upland Wildlife Habitat Management; 342 Critical Area Planting; 562 Recreation Area Improvement; 550 Range Planting; 327 Conservation Cover; 643 Restoration and Management of Rare or Declining Habitats; 647 Early Successional Habitat Development/Management; 601 Vegetative Barrier; 590 Nutrient Management; and others.

Your assistance in collecting this plant helps support the NRCS conservation practice standards which are employed daily to conserve the natural resources of Louisiana!

## Centers Requesting Seed:

East Texas Plant Materials Center, Golden Meadow Plant Materials Center

## **How to Collect Seed:**

1. Identify native plant stands in your area. Use field guides and websites for helpful photos.
2. Determine if seed is mature. Mature seed is typically dry and will easily separate from the seed head.
3. Hand strip mature seed by grasping the bottom of the seed head then gently pulling away from the base of the plant. Deposit seed in a brown paper sack. Collect seed from a minimum of 30 to 50 plants.
4. Label each collection as it is made so collections do not get mixed up. Information required includes: Collector's name, number of plants collected, location (parish, city, highway, and GPS coordinates), site description (soil type, slope, and plants growing in association).
5. Complete NRCS-ECS-580; Plant Collection Information Form and mail with collected seeds to the NRCS Plant Materials Center requesting the species.

USDA-NRCS  
Golden Meadow Plant Materials Center  
438 Airport Road  
Galliano, LA 70354

USDA - NRCS  
East Texas Plant Materials Center  
6598 FM 2782  
Nacogdoches, TX 75964

## **Helpful Tips:**

Look for plants that display differences in color, height, or forage abundance and record observations. Differences in growing site or location should be made into separate collections if they are separated by more than 1 mile between sites.

## **Other Photos:**

<http://plants.usda.gov>

<http://www.noble.org/imagegallery/index.html>

<http://www.missouriplants.com>

<http://www.wildflower.org>



Jennifer Anderson @ USDA-NRCS PLANTS Database



USDA-NRCS PLANTS  
Database / Hitchcock, A.S.  
(rev. A. Chase). 1950. *Manual  
of the grasses of the United  
States*. USDA Misc. Publ. No.  
200. Washington, DC.